



January 23, 2017 | 9:00 – 11:30 am

10 Park Plaza, Boston | **Conference Rooms 5 & 6, behind the security desk on mezzanine level**

Meeting Summary

Discussion:

Review analysis of Planned Growth and Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue models¹:

Mark Abbott (CTPS) presented the results of the analysis of modeling the Planned Growth scenario. He reviewed that the transportation network in the Planned Growth scenario was consistent with the 2016 LRTP. He compared the intersection delays of the Planned Growth model run to 2016 existing condition delays. The results showed a significant increase in intersection delay and failing intersections in the Planned Growth alternative modeling for 2040.

He then compared the results of the Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue underpass alternative to the Planned Growth scenario. He explained that there is not a significant increase in VMT between Planned Growth and the Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue alternative. Some intersections, including in Sullivan Square, Austin Street, and Route 1/City Square had improved congestion in the underpass scenario. The Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue scenario also showed significant improvement to intersection congestion in Sullivan Square such that there were no failing intersections, as well as significant improvements in congestion on Rutherford Avenue.

Brad Rawson (Somerville) requested that VMT be presented in light of density of traffic, rather than raw VMT, to make comparisons across cases more consistent.

In response to a question about whether the improvements to congestion could create an influx of traffic to the area, Mr. Abbott clarified that the increased development creates the demand, and that improvements themselves should not affect demand.

Mr. Abbott explained that both alternatives maintained existing I-93 conditions. The Planned Growth Alternative showed one fewer section failing going northbound for PM traffic on I-93. The Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue alternative did not show any change on I-93 compared

¹ For detailed modeling results, see the presentations prepared by CTPS from the January 23, 2017 meeting, which are available here:

<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/planning/Main/CurrentStudies/LowerMysticRegionalWorkingGroup/Documents.aspx>

to Planned Growth.

Mr. Abbott explained that the bus lane modeled in the Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue alternative from the Alford Street bridge to Sullivan Square did not show a significant decrease in travel time (likely due to it being such a short length of bus lane.)

Mr. Abbott clarified that the analyses of peak-hour delays used the averages of the three-hour peaks.

Approval of the next round of alternatives to model

Mr. Abbott reviewed the next set of alternatives that the group was considering for approval to model²:

- 3 & 4: “Infrastructure Light,” plus parking constraint variations
- 5: “Ramps and Lanes,” plus ramp variation
- 6: “Buses and Trains,” plus parking constraint variation
- 7: “Ride, Walk, and Bike”

He explained that CTPS would begin by doing an overall analysis for Alternatives 3 and 4, and then if improvements are shown, CTPS would drill down further to do a Synchro-level analysis. Scott Peterson (CTPS) recommended that Alternative 7 would be the best place to incorporate Orange Line headway improvements since it could be isolated most easily from the other components and because the bike/pedestrian improvements would be complementary to the Orange Line improvements in terms of connectivity. Jim Gillooly (Boston) stated that Orange Line headway improvements were a priority to model. He also added a desire to test a tighter Silver Line extension in Alternative 6 that would make a closed loop and perhaps not include Kendall. Mr. Rawson recommended that, if adjustments to the Silver Line ring were being considered, the group examine the urban ring environmental report and the McGrath study to consider what analysis had already been done. Pat Field (CBI) recommended convening a meeting with the three cities and any other Working Group members who wanted to participate to discuss train and bus options for Alternative 6.

“Orange Line Spur” option for Alternative 8

Mr. Abbott stated the option of an “Orange Line Spur” scenario being considered for model run 8. Fred Salvucci (Somerville) suggested using the third set of tracks in Sullivan Square to make a turnaround to service the spur. He also asked what headways the Orange Line would be able to achieve. Mr. Abbott relayed a conversation CTPS had had with Orange Line staff, in which the staff reported that if not for capital constraints, a 2-minute headway might be feasible, but that Orange Line staff were doing more research before making an estimate. CTPS will continue to gather information from the Orange Line and prepare options to present to the Working Group on a scenario for the spur. Eric Bourassa (MAPC) stated that improved headways would be needed to accommodate a spur which itself would lead to longer headways.

² For detailed descriptions of each alternative, see the LMRWG alternatives cheat sheet and/or the previous meeting summaries and presentations where the options were discussed in detail.

Choosing a Sullivan Square baseline for modeling purposes for subsequent scenarios

The group discussed the options of either carrying through the underpass Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue scenario or the LRTP baseline scenario for the subsequent model runs, considering the desire to use a common baseline to create a consistent comparison between alternatives. Mr. Gillooly expressed Boston's desire for more information before making a determination about which scenario would be more useful to carry forward. He emphasized that because Boston's Rutherford Avenue study had not made a determination of which option to recommend, it would be difficult to predict which was more likely to be used going forward, and that selecting one as the baseline for the LMRWG study should only be considered an option to study, not a recommendation.

Group members emphasized the limited model runs available in the study scope, which constrained the ability to carry forward multiple scenarios. Mr. Field reviewed the decision rules for the group and explained that if the five decision-making members (the cities, MassDOT, and MAPC) could not reach consensus, that MassDOT was charged with making the decision.

The group agreed to give the City of Boston staff time to consider the options. Mr. Field recommended that a call be planned for the five decision-making members in one week to make a determination of next steps.

Other alternatives to consider for remaining model runs

Marc Draisen (MAPC) stated a preference to test other land use options in a model run. He emphasized that many land use variables have an impact on traffic, and underscored the responsibility of the group to look at land use as well as TDM and transportation infrastructure in considering strategies to reduce congestion in the study area. He stated that a land use alternative could come closer to the end of the modeling process and perhaps be compared against a preferred alternative. Carri Hulet (CBI) suggested that it might be possible to solicit feedback from the public on land use options in the next round of public engagement.

Public engagement and discussion group update

Ms. Hulet provided a brief update on the discussion group sessions that were scheduled for the weeks following the meeting. Mr. Gillooly communicated a desire from Charlestown residents to have a meeting in Charlestown in the evening. Ms. Hulet agreed to contact Charlestown neighborhood groups in order to plan such a session.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.